

# Rapa Nui Notes 3

et al.: Rapa Nui Notes 1987



**Rapa Nui Notes** is an international newsletter published four times per year for the benefit of all those interested in the archaeology and anthropology of Easter Island. Correspondence, brief articles, photographs, drawings, reviews of books and films, announcements of conferences and publications, and related materials are invited, but we cannot be responsible for unsolicited items or anything submitted without adequate return postage or International Reply Coupon. Subscription rates: US 4 issues \$12; foreign 4 issues \$20 sent airmail; US funds only, please. Address: Georgia Lee, Ph.D., Rapa Nui Notes, P.O. Box 1275, San Luis Obispo CA 93406 USA.

ISSN 0890-2097 ©Georgia Lee 1987

## SPRING, 1987

## News Briefs

From Santiago comes the news about exciting discoveries at the site of Anakena. An international crew, headed by Thor Heyerdahl, has been excavating at that site and recently disclosed that they have found evidence of several occupation levels, some of them dating from the earliest period. Trenches disclosed distinct levels and included organic material which can be dated. Fragments of eyes of moai were recovered from, it is said, the "first period". It is believed that the levels extend from the 5th century A.D. until contact by Europeans. We will have more about these finds in our next issue of Rapa Nui Notes.

Another ship has gone aground on the island. The "Panama Bay," which was removing some of the heavy equipment used for the runway extension, suffered serious damage on the 15th of January when heavy swells forced it onto the rocks near Anakena. A tugboat from Panama is enroute to assist with its removal.

If you were on the island in July-August of 1983, you will remember the amazing sight of the huge lumber carrier, "Regent Oak," which crashed on the rocks just off the village of Hanga Roa. Efforts to repair her failed, and she was towed out to sea and sunk. Last winter, a private sailboat from Tahiti was wrecked near Ana Kai Tangata. These events are cited as evidence of the vital need for construction of a safe harbor/anchorage on the island.

Rumors are that the major roads of the island are to be paved at last. Different types of paving are now being tested.

## Conservators at Work

A professional art conservator, Maria Eugenia Van de Maele, has been working with some preservation problems associated with paintings on the island. She is involved in a program of conservation funded by UNESCO, and to date she has cleaned and used preservation technology on the painted slabs from Orongo, now in the island's museum. Deposits of salts are one of the main problems with these artifacts. As for Ana Kai Tangata, it is hoped that a substance can be injected into the painted slabs in order to keep them from falling.

In December the Chilean newspaper, El Mercurio, announced the beginning of a ten-year project to treat the island's statues in order to prevent further erosion. The first of 336 moai to be restored is Kio'e, which is located near Tahai and the Museum. This project is taking place under the Direccion de Bibliotecas, Archivos y Museos, and in collaboration with the United Nations and a German chemical firm. An organic consolidating material is to be applied to the moai; this substance will replace the natural binding in the tufa, eliminate accumulated water from the stone, and prevent further erosion. The art conservator in charge is Dr. Michael Roth, whose past projects include work on the caves of Altamira in Spain and the restoration of the Pieta.

Published by Kahualike,

## In This Issue . . .

**Legends Linked to Rock Art**  
**Edmundo Edwards Returns**  
**Cousteau in Rapa Nui Video**

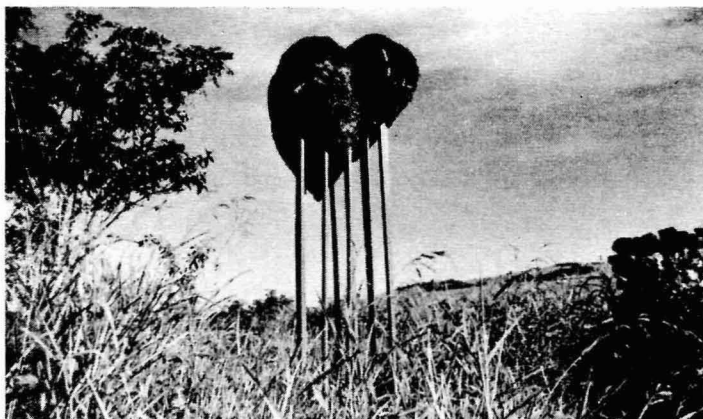
## Rent-A-Sheep Mowers

The era of sheep ranching on Rapa Nui is finally over, and has been replaced by cattle ranching. The herds of sheep--up to 70,000 head--which formerly roamed the island have been eliminated as unproductive and damaging to the island's fragile environment.

When the decision was made, the original solution was to simply shoot them. However, an outcry from the islanders caused cooler heads to prevail, and the sheep were sold instead, for \$10. a head. Most were promptly barbecued but one enterprising Rapa Nui had a brainstorm: he rents out sheep as an alternative to cutting grass, and they can be seen in various yards, tied to a cement block, happily munching in a wide circle. They do need some monitoring as they tend to go after flowers and everything else within reach. This is a charming alternative to power mowers and typical of the Rapanui who tend to maximize their options.

## Another Mystery Object

A different sort of statuary now graces the road going inland from the mercado. It was placed there as an architectural project from the University of Chile's architecture department; its purpose is to help "beautify" the island. I must say it is unique, and brought us to a screeching halt the first time we saw it. It is constructed of 2 large lumps of volcanic tuff, elevated on 14 brass rods, and looms some 10 feet tall.



The island's newest sculpture, created as an architectural project by students from the Universidad de Chile.

# Cruises Increasing

Cruise ships have been extending their itineraries to include Easter Island. Scheduled to arrive in 1987 is the Rotterdam which carries some 1500-2000 persons. The potential impact of this number of people staggers the imagination. Fortunately, cruise ships rarely stay more than one day. We were told that an Italian line ship will be coming, plus Society Expeditions ships and the Sea Cloud--a 4-masted, square-rigged barque.

Society Expeditions has a 15 day cruise, "In Search of Aku-Aku", which travels between Chile and Easter Island (Society Expeditions, 723 Broadway East, Seattle, WA 98102). Very little time is actually spent on Easter Island.

Nature Expeditions also has a 15 day trip to Easter Island that begins and ends in Santiago, Chile; this one features 8 full days on the island. (Nature Expeditions, P.O. Box 11496, Eugene, OR 97440).

Two other tours, each of 28 days duration, include Easter Island as part of an extensive sightseeing trip that also takes in many parts of South America, including sites in Chile, Peru, Argentina, and Ecuador. (Hemphill Harris Travel, 16000 Ventura Blvd, Encino, CA 91436; Travcoa, 875 N. Michigan Ave., Chicago, IL 60611.)

# Edwards Returns

Many readers have inquired about Edmundo Edwards. I am happy to report that he is alive and well, and has returned to Rapa Nui. His name popped up in the San Francisco Chronicle's insert Magazine, "Great Escapes," October 26, 1986, in an article called "Marquesas Magic."

For those of you who have not met Edmundo, he is a 6th generation Chilean who lived on Rapa Nui for 20 years, and was one of the few inhabitants of the island who spoke English--the result of having an English nanny as a child. His ties to the island go back to an uncle, Bishop Rafael Edwards, who came to the island in 1916 and whose literary output influenced the press and eventually brought pressure against the repressive sheep company which had made life miserable for the islanders. He was also instrumental in establishing the first leper sanitarium--a project that still involves the Edwards family. \*

Before working as an archaeologist for the French Government, surveying and documenting sites in both French Polynesia and in the Marquesas, Edmundo was associated with the Instituto de Estudios de la Universidad de Chile as an ethno-historian. His current plans include lecturing on the Society Expedition cruises; spending summers on Rapa Nui, and working in French Polynesia during the winter months.

\* Readers who are interested in the historical period on the island can refer to a paperback by J. Douglas Porteous, *The Modernization of Easter Island*, 1981; Western Geographic Series 19, Department of Geography, University of Victoria, B.C. Canada.

# Estaban Schantz???

Does anyone out there know the whereabouts of Estaban Schantz, a Chilean meteorologist who was on Easter Island when the original airstrip was built? He recorded the petroglyph site which was destroyed for the runway, and this information could be very important. So far, attempts to locate him have been fruitless.

# Of Geneology, Placenames

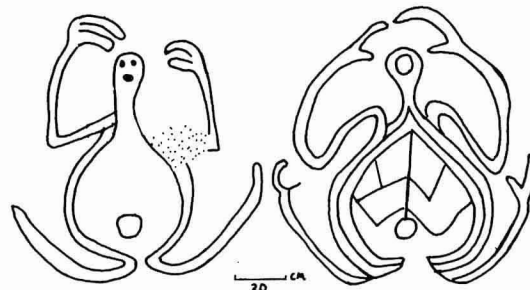
Two works by islanders are now in progress and may be of considerable interest to scholars concerned with Rapa Nui placenames and clan divisions. One is by Alberto Hotus Chavez, who is one of the culture bearers of the island. A native islander, Alberto stowed away at age 18 and became a hospital attendant in Chile. Eventually he returned to the island and for the past 10 years has worked on a corrected, contemporary version of the ancient territorial divisions of the prehistoric population. His results differ from the lineage divisions as reported by Routledge and Metraux, and includes geneological lists and a description of each family's history. At this time, an English translation is being worked on by Edmundo Edwards and Alberto hopes that it can also be translated into French. It is rumored that it may be published in New Zealand.

A long-time island resident from Chile, Nico Wilkins, and islander Iralia Tuki Pakarati, are working together to record ancient placenames from another of the island's culture bearers, Jose Fati Puarakei. A detailed map is being prepared, showing the place names of natural features as well as ancient sites. Legends connected with them are being collected on tape, in Rapanui, and then translated into Spanish. It is hoped that this "Topomimia of Easter Island" will someday be published with an accompanying English translation.

# Legends Linked to Rapa Nui Rock Art

In conjunction with the 1986 Field Season to document rock art on Rapa Nui, many legends concerning specific sites were collected. We are grateful to Guillermo [Keremō] Ika, who worked closely with our project. Keremō helped us locate sites, determined place names for many of them, and recorded legends about them. These legends came from various elderly islanders, and were recorded on tape, in Rapa Nui. Keremō then translated them into Spanish, and currently these are being translated into English. It is hoped that a small publication can be made with the legends in English and Spanish, and illustrated by our drawings of the specific petroglyphs.

It appears that many of the petroglyphs we have recorded refer to legends and it is of vital importance to collect these while they are still remembered.



These two pikea, or crab-like figures, are associated with a legend, according to Keremo Ika Araki. The one on the left represents an "aku-aku" spirit and is known as "pikea uri a tangata honu"; the other is called "pikea uri a hau maka o Hiva." These are located near the ruins of an old ahu above and west of Anakena beach, and are among the many petroglyphs recorded during the 1986 field season.

The Bollettino del Centro Camuno di Studi Preistorici, Vol. XXII, 1986, has an article entitled, "Easter Island: Recent Archaeological Research", pg. 69-90; by Georgia Lee. It is lavishly illustrated, including 4 pages in full color [oh, the joys of Italian publications!]. Regrettably, the publisher left out all photo credits, for which I apologize; several of the pictures they used were from former participants in my projects. My thanks go to Bill Hyder, Mark Oliver, and Marcia Opal, all of whom are unsung contributors to the article's photographic impact.

The Journal of New World Archaeology has a recent issue, entirely on the subject of Easter Island. This is Vol.7 No.1, August 1986, and is available from the Institute of Archaeology, Kinsey Hall, University of California, 405 Hilgard, Los Angeles, CA 90024. Papers include: "Introduction," by Sergio Rapu; "Red Scoria on Easter Island: Sculpture, Artifacts and Architecture," by Jo Anne Van Tilburg; "Residential Settlements, History of Rapa Nui South Coastal Plane," by Christopher Stevenson and Claudio Cristino; "The Birdman Motif of Easter Island," by Georgia Lee; and "Pipi and Pure: Ethno-archaeology of the Rapa Nui Shell Industry," by Joan Seaver.

The Washington Post carried an article about the late Bob Alexander on September 13th of last year. His collection of Easter Island material has gone to the Smithsonian's Anthropology section. Bob, who started his collection years ago at the suggestion of Edmundo Edwards, was a wonderful source of esoteric information and we miss him a lot. "The Collected Easter Island Bibliography of Robert P. Alexander" is to be published by the Bishop Museum, co-authored by Robert Alexander and Charles Love.

Word has been received from Germany about a new publication, Oceania. Edited by Dr. Heide-Margaret Esen-Baur, "Arbeitsgruppe Ozeanien 1985" contains a report by Esen-Baur on the Easter Island congress which was held in 1984; other papers deal with Tonga, Samoa, New Hebrides, and New Guinea. This publication costs \$8 U.S., it will be published twice a year, and foreign scholars are urged to submit manuscripts. For information, contact Dr. Esen-Baur at AlbanusstraBe 11, 6242 Kronberg-Schonberg, West Germany.

An interesting publication has been released recently: Relatos de la Isla de Pascua (A'Amu o Rapa Nui), published in 1986 by Editorial Andres Bello, Av. Ricardo Lyon 946, Santiago de Chile. This paperback book contains stories by 11 Rapanui authors, and is an outgrowth of a creative writing workshop that began in 1984, and taught by Bob and Nancy Weber, of the Sumner Institute of Linguistics. The stories are in both Spanish and Rapanui and cover a wide range from personal memories to retold legends to love poetry (333 pages). For information about obtaining a copy, write the publisher.

In manuscript form is "The Katherine Routledge Lantern Slide Collection, Easter Island and the South Pacific." This interesting manuscript has the slides from the Routledge expeditions that are now in the collection of the Museum of Mankind, British Museum. These appear to have been slides used by Mrs. Routledge for lectures, and many are not duplicated in her publications. For information, contact Charles M. Love, Dept. of Geology and Archaeology, Western Wyoming College, Rock Springs, WYO 82901.

The results of a joint study on the so-called "sun stones" at Orongo, as described by Ferdon in "The Ceremonial Site of Orongo", Reports of the Norwegian Archaeological Expedition to Easter Island and the South Pacific, Vol. I, is currently in press. The title of the report is "Easter Island's Sun Stones: a Critique", by William Liller and Georgia Lee, and it will appear in the Journal of the Polynesian Society, Vol. 96, probably in March or June of 1987.

Manuscritos y Documentos Españoles para la Historia de la Isla de Pascua by Francisco Mellén Blanco has recently been published. The work received special mention from the jury of awards, Cultura Hispanica, in 1983. It is available from Francisco Mellén Blanco, c/ Caidos División Azul, 2; 28016 Madrid, Spain. Price is U.S. \$40, which includes air mail postage.

A paper entitled "Symbolic Stratigraphy: Rock Art and the monolithic statues of Easter Island", by Jo Anne Van Tilburg and Georgia Lee, will be published in an up-coming issue of World Archaeology. This work describes and discusses the problem of petroglyphs applied to existing statues, topknots, or ahu. The "re-use" of certain sacred surfaces in this manner is a subject previously not addressed in Easter Island research.

The March/April (1987) issue of Archaeology Magazine will feature an article by Jo Anne Van Tilburg titled, "Symbolic Archaeology on Easter Island: The Integration of Time, Type, Function and Meaning". It is lengthy, comprehensive and profusely illustrated.

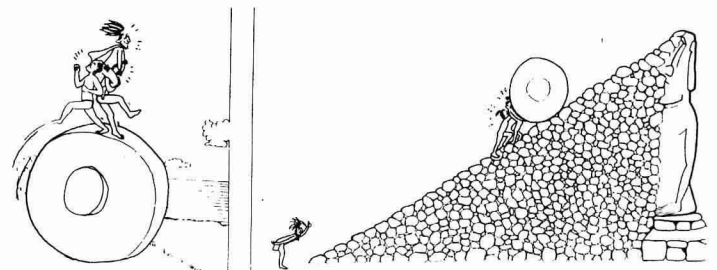
Ana Maria Arredondo has a paper concerning the rei-miro in print. It is titled, "Un ornamento pectoral pascuense representado en los petroglyphs", IN: Estudios en arte rupestre, Aldunate del S., Carlos; Jose Berenguer R.; and Victoria Castro R., eds. Published by the Museo Chileno de Arte Precolombino, Casilla 3687, Santiago, 1985.

Ana Maria is currently working on a paper concerning the late Rapa Nui artist, Melchor Huke Atan, whose cave paintings grace the shelter at Hanga Tu'u Hata. He decorated this cave with bird figures and a Makemake face, and had plans to paint several other caves on the island but was prevented from doing so by the former governor. Melchor also worked in oil, on canvas. He studied art in Chile and is one of the few painters to come out of the island. It should prove to be a most interesting story.

## Van Tilburg Paper Set for SAA

The Society for American Archaeology will hold its annual meeting in Toronto, Canada, on May 6-10. A symposium on Sunday, May 10th, entitled "Post-processual studies in Pacific Island Archaeology and Ethnohistory" will be chaired by Jo Anne Van Tilburg who will also present a paper, "Easter Island Monolithic Statues and the Symbolic Depiction of Rank Differential".

The workshop for astro-photographers and observers which was planned for April/May, in conjunction with Sky and Telescope Magazine has been cancelled because of El Nino conditions.



Drawings from the delightful spoof, Te Ariki, by Nico Wilkins Lihn of Isla de Pascua. This privately published booklet of cartoons provides a humorous, off-beat view of the ancient culture.



# Watching Cousteau on Rapa Nui

The following review has very kindly been contributed by Alan Davis-Drake.

Cousteau Odyssey 6: BLIND PROPHETS OF EASTER ISLAND.

Originally released in 1978, and now available on video tape for the first time, this film is a visual adventure documenting the Cousteau team's exploration of Rapa Nui. It is a must for every lover of Rapa Nui--an animated coffee table book.

Whereas Jacques Cousteau is usually at home under the sea, this feature fortunately stays on land. A few token underwater shots reveal a barren landscape. Nothing much to see. Everything worth our time is above sea level. As he descends into the sea, Cousteau himself says, "...it is quickly apparent that the shelf around the island is a submerged desert, as if somehow, the impoverishment of the land above were a cancerous disease, spreading its domain outward..."

In contrast, Phillipe Cousteau's aerial photography is exciting. It's a disappointment that we're not given more. The landscape rushes by, so unlike the familiar tedium of bumping across the Rapa Nui landscape on horse or motor vehicle. Fortunately, here is where a VCR's slow motion feature comes in, allowing a leisurely look at the Tahai complex from the air.

We also catch glimpses of the Cousteau team exploring caves. (They claim to have crawled into 200 during their stay.) These brief glances are perhaps the only realistic look most of us will ever have of what it is like to venture into the famous Rapa Nui underworld.

The scenes with Dr. William Mulloy are delightful, and plentiful. We listen in on his conversations with Cousteau as they sit dangerously perched on the cliffs of Orongo or lounge in the sun on Ahu Vai Uri. They balance high on the quarries of Rano Raraku and come up with humorous reasons for the island's demise, and then suddenly they are at the site of the reconstruction of Ahu Huri a Urenga. Finally we hear Mulloy enunciate the elusive word "boustrophedon" in the island museum.... Also interviewed, in the quiet confines of an Orongo house, is Gonzalo Figueroa Garcia-Huidobro.

Elsewhere around the island we meet Professor Jorge de Silva, Dr. Ramon Campbell, Robert Koll, and the ubiquitous nameless, Rapanui themselves. (There are fortunately, quick glimpses of familiar faces.)

The film is a thorough introduction to Rapa Nui. We watch Cousteau wrestle with the major questions and their current explanations: the first settlers, the early houses, moai creation and transportation, rongo rongo, the manutara cult, internal warfare, wood carvings, Rapanui music and song, petroglyphs and more petroglyphs.... In the process, all the local hot spots are visited. It is all a perfect reminder of our own adventures on Rapa Nui, an accurate reflection to show to friends who have never been there.

Written and narrated by Theodore Strauss, the scientific facts are thoughtfully presented, continuously and sensitively juxtaposed with Cousteau's unique poetic sense of the world as a whole. Cousteau begins the film saying "Here, like an absent minded refugee fleeing disaster, the past has left its luggage...." The film ends with him saying, "Here, in the endless sea, a vagrant cell of human life anchored itself, created a civilization, and vanished...." This movie is a poetic, yet sensible summarization of the scientific view of Rapa Nui. The only questions it does not attempt to answer are the ones posed by its own title: Who are the blind prophets, and what are their prophesies?

Warner Home Video Inc.; VHS, 59 minutes. Not rated. \$24.98.

As a postscript to Alan's review, readers may be interested in a bit of background regarding the aerial photography of Phillipe Cousteau. While skimming along at tree-top level to photograph a herd of running horses, a sudden change of wind brought the aircraft crashing to earth. Islanders rushed to help remove Phillipe from the wreckage (he escaped with a broken kneecap), but they were waved away until the film crew could arrive and photograph the rescue. The dauntless Phillipe later was to lose his life in an airplane crash in Portugal.

## Our Subscribers

Our readers continue to give us strokes, and we do appreciate hearing from you all. A happy subscriber writes, "I am personally delighted to know your conception of this worthwhile project has become real. Your energetic move to create this long needed source of Rapa Nui information will be happily received by countless scores of Rapanuiphiles. The potential of a newsletter/forum for Rapa Nui is thrilling to ponder...Information on recent publications is invaluable in itself..."

## Rapa Nui Notes 3

P.O. Box 1275

San Luis Obispo CA 93406



SPRING  
1987

BULK RATE  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
San Luis Obispo  
CA 93401  
PERMIT No. 137